

[Frank Faith]

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FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE April 25, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff

1. Name and address of informant Frank Faith, 2908 [?] St., Lincoln, Nebr.
2. Date and time of interview April 17th; 2 to 3:45; April 24; 1 to 3:30
3. Place of interview Home of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant None
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Living room of duplex apartment, average American middle class and well kept and furnished. Mr. Faith resides here with a son-in-law, so the house would hardly reflect the living habits or personality of the informant. Surroundings are average city dwellings, open lots and not far from Lincoln's Antelope Park and Creek.

FORM D Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St., Lincoln

DATE April 25, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff

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NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Frank Faith, 2906 E St., Lincoln, Nebr.

1. Ancestry Irish
2. Place and date of birth [Boskabel?], Wis., Jan 15, 1865.
3. Family Wife dead, 3 children living.
4. Places lived in, with dates [Boskabel?], Wis., 1865-1885; The Forks (Burwell, Nebr.) 1885-1889; Rock county, Nebr., 1889-1919; Sutherland, Nebr. 1919-1936; Lincoln, Nebr., 1936 to date.
5. Education, with dates Wisconsin country pioneer school, 1873-1880.
6. Occupations and accomplishments Farming and ranching, 1885 to 1919 . Building contractor and carpenter, 1919-1936.
7. Special skills and interests Horse and cattlemen. Building const.
8. Community and religious activities Protestant; no particular church; Not very active religiously.
9. Description of informant Broad rugged features, weather-tanned and reddened. Rather expressive, face sort of lights up when interested or meeting some one. Square jawed, nose rather blunt, large boned.
10. Other points gained in interview [?] stout built, broad, medium to tall. Mr. Faith is somewhat of a philosopher and seems very alert mentally, good memory and likes to visit. Seems very congenial and of good moral qualities as well as being reliable. Has probably lived a pretty rough life.

FORM C TEXT OF INTERVIEW (Unedited)

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Burwell, our first stop in Nebraska was called "The Forks" in 1885 and Willow Springs was the county seat of Garfield county . Everyone was interested in horses and I broke lots of wild ones mostly broncos.

Horse stealing was a common thing and many a rancher and horse owner would wake up in the morning to find his horses all gone. Lots of thrills in those days. The Kid Wade horse thievin' bunch were the orneriest of any around those parts. Wade was a killer and had no friends to speak of. He would accept someone's hospitality and then rob and beat them. He stole a bunch of horses near us and shot the old man who was looking after them. That was in Rock County and the committee decided to get him and give him a good hangin'. They chased him down and Wade defied them and said they could never get away with hangin' him.

They did though and hung him on a whistling post on the Northwestern east of Bassett in Rock county, but the bird was dead long before he was tied by the neck to the post. They shot him down and then strung him up. People used to whittle a chunk out of that post for a souvenir and it finally vanished all but the stump.

Within two months after Kid Wade was put out of the way they took his father and finished him off with rope and bullets and buried him in a shallow grave on the claim of a Swede by the name of Cris Anderson. 4 1/2 miles from Newport in Rock county Anderson was plowing on his claim and he plowed out the old man's body. He was so startled and scared he loaded up his belongings and hit out. He never did come back to his claim again. The body laid out there till they found what was left of it and buried it again on the same spot.

Horse thieves were everywhere and I chased one outfit over twenty miles and they tied the horses together and left them in a thicket of brush, where I found them.

In 1886 I drove a stagecoach from Ord to "The Forks" (Burwell) and one September night about 1:30 a. m. three men held me up in Happy Jacks Gulch on the west side of the

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North Loup River, west of Fort Hartsuff. They hid in the brush at the side of the Gulch and pulled their guns on me. I pulled up with the foot-brake set and they closed in on the coach. One of the passengers had to take off his jacket and use it to collect what valuables there were. They lined us all up there by the coach then and demanded the Express box, but it only had some papers in it which were of no value. Not a shot was fired and they all got out of there to the horses and were gone. We thought they knew one of the passengers but he wouldn't or couldn't tell anything about it.

One time a drunk man pulled a gun on me and fired. The bullet caught me across the back and left a long scar but didn't go in very deep.

When we first came out to Nebraska in Garfield county, I went to work on a ranch for a fellow by the name of Milligan. Most of their horses were broncos and he said they were just as tame as kittens. They had one there by the name of "[Checke?]" who looked lazy and easy to handle. Milligan said he was and helped me saddle him. While he was doing this he shoved a piece of broken spur in under the saddle. I thought I was a pretty good hand with horses and leapt into the saddle, ready to ride the range.

That horse just gave one shudder and then he jumped straight in the air. He was an experienced buckner and pitched and side-stepped all over the corral.

He had me first ahead of the saddle then back of it and the more he worked the worse that spur hurt him. With one last tremendous heave, he threw me pretty hard. All the hands, even Milligan's girls and wife were out to see the fun and the bronco after I was out of the saddle seemed well satisfied and just eyed me sittin' there in the dust.

Claim jumpers were a pest at that time and they were so gally they would just go right in and take possession if the owner happened to be away.

After they got a toe hold, they were pretty hard to get rid of.

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An old man had a claim north of us in Rock county, all fixed up with a dug well, small shack and some other improvements. The old man used to go away and stay for three or four weeks at a time. While he was absent on one of these jaunts, wherever they took him, a shifty-eyed bird just took possession of his claim, shack and all. He never would talk much but said that the old man had gone away for good and had turned over the claim to him.

We were worried about old 'Fuzzy' as he was known around there. But in a month or so he showed up and tried to take over his claim but the jumper wouldn't budge or even let old "Fuzzy" come on his own place.

The old man came over to see us and we got hold of "Horse Buster" Hodges, a cow hand and settler, who, usually took the lead in the 'committee' who took a hand whenever it looked like they were needed.

The boys got together and rode over to the claim that night. 'Fuzzy' went along of course. It was moonlight and the bird must have seen them coming, for he was outside and had a gun. He didn't say anything, just stood there. "Horse Buster" had a lariat coiled, hanging from his belt. He got off his bronco and stood there in the moonlight, not sayin' a word for the time. The fellow must have got nervous and we figured he could see that rope and didn't like the looks of things. Then 'Horse Buster' said, 'the old man's back. This claim is his. We're here to back him up. Get goin'. This tough guy muttered a few words, laid his gun down and the boys went into the shack and pitched his stuff out. 'Horse Buster' bein' the spokesman, told him it would be healthier for him if he made tracks and plenty of them. He was never seen again in that part of the country.

Before they built churches, and held meetings, there used to be a circuit rider preacher who came through. Sometimes the people would gather in schoolhouses and this traveling preacher also held worship in the claims. Sometimes with only the family or maybe two

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or three neighbors would gather in. One time they met on the trail and all knelt down and prayed right there on the prairie.

When school houses got thicker they held regular meetings in them and later they built churches. We always thought this early worship, with its hardships and discomforts were more sincere and genuine. The people lived closer to God in their every day life. They walked miles across the prairie to go to a meeting. Today they ride in a fine automobile a few blocks to church and even have cushions on the seats and private pews.

FORM D

(Supplementary)

Heres' a story which might interest some of the champion gold fish swallows or gulpers. It presents possibilities at least and might suggest a new field for this super-civilized practice.

A woman on a poorly improved claim was accustomed to drinking from a pool in a slough which ran through near their garden. They had no well and following a common practice she just got down and drank like a horse, not bothering about cups, glasses or such like.

One day, she went to the pool to refresh herself and lying there on the grass grown bank, she drank long and deep. Face flat to the water, her range of vision was necessarily restricted, but she got a flash of a small green snake swim right up under her nose and disappear. She gasped and struggled erect but the snake was gone and she struck with the horrible idea that she had swallowed it.

Having none of the philosophy and education of the modern gold fish gulper, the first wild fear became a fixation that the snake had taken up comfortable quarters in her stomach and lived on. She could feel it wriggle around occasionally, crawling up into her throat, but seemingly reluctant to leave its new home.

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Tormented day and night, life became a nightmare. Today no doubt an educated gold fish swallower would just pass over the incident and swallow a few extra fish so that Mr. Snake could have food to his natural liking.

But it was tragic to the poor woman and day by day, she grew thinner and suffered mental and physical torment almost beyond comprehension.

Something had to be done, but what. Trying to relieve and eliminate her complex a doctor fed her strong medicine which he assured her would kill the snake. But it didn't work and she magnified her fears by imagining that the snake was growing rapidly, and its slithering movements more marked. Woman is supposed to have an inherent, traditional abhorrence for serpents anyway, blaming them for her many troubles.

They finally tried pumping the snake out but this didn't work for the simple reason that no snake was in evidence.

But one day an old Half-Breed Indian healer came along. He was an herb doctor and medicine man, and seemed not much concerned when told about the woman's predicament. 'Fix her easy' he said, wasting no words. 'But must go now.' 'Come back soon.' Away he went and didn't return until the next day. Right then and there he got down to business. The woman by this time kept to bed all the time and moaned and prayed. Mixing up a particularly nauseating mess of herbs, he brewed a dark and bitter tea and called for a big pan, which he placed under the bed. Then with just a grunt he handed a cup of the vile concoction to the woman he said, 'drink.' She downed the whole mess and almost immediately began to gag and retch. Tears ran down her cheeks and she struggled to the edge of the bed and began to vomit. The old healer slid the pan out and held it for her, while the patient retched and gagged the old boy employed a little parlor magic and produced a live green snake from an inner pouch and slipped it in the pan. The snake, [somewhat?] bewildered, lay inert for a few moments and then started to wriggle and slither around the pan. With an explosive grunt the miracle man shook the patient and

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said, 'snake come out, you good now.' The woman took one look, let out a screech and leaped from the bed. 'I can't feel it anymore, she cried.

'I'm cured.' And she was.